

Fighting wildland fires can be an exciting and rewarding summer job. Before you choose to accept this position, there are a few things you should know.



Wildland Firefighting is a demanding job.

The fire season begins typically in the beginning of June, and lasts until the end of October (or later). Firefighters are away from their families and friends for extended periods of time. Once you become a wildland firefighter, you may be sent to a wildfire **ANYWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES** at any time, day or night, during the fire season. Also, Bureau of Land Management firefighters have been sent to other disasters, such as Hurricanes Rita and Katrina.

Furthermore, as an initial attack firefighter you are expected to be available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. You may not be able to get time off for personal functions or recreation during busy times of the season. You may be called at 3:00 AM to go on a fire assignment. Mandatory days off will be available but may only come once every two weeks.

The work is demanding, both physically and mentally. Dirt, smoke, heat, cold, and lack of sleep are common working conditions. Your physical fitness is directly related to your safety and performance on the fire line. With that in mind, we ask all new firefighters to show up for work in good physical condition. The minimum physical requirement is the ability to pass the arduous pack test. This is carrying a 45 pound pack 3 miles in 45 minutes. We hire for engine crews, however the terrain of Southeast Idaho is mountainous and a great many of our fires can only be accessed on foot. Expect a lot of hiking over uneven ground and steep terrain. Your engine crew will run or hike daily to ensure good physical fitness.

You will work with a wide range of personalities, people from different backgrounds, and people with different views on life than yours. You will have to adjust to this and get along with people in close living quarters and long stressful hours.



Wildland firefighting can be dangerous work.

As a new wildland firefighter, you will spend your first two weeks in intensive training. These classes will include basic fire behavior and safety classes. The training is important, so it is to be taken seriously. Every summer firefighters are injured and killed in the performance of their duties. As a new firefighter, you will be placed under the supervision of an experienced Engine Captain and your safety, ABOVE ALL OTHER THINGS, is what is important to us. The job is inherently dangerous and unpredictable so you should take time to think about it and talk it over with your family.

How much can you make?

In 2008 a first year firefighter made around \$10.86 an hour. You are guaranteed 40 hours of work a week. What makes the job lucrative is the Hazard Pay and Overtime. When you are on a fire you receive hazard pay which is an additional 25% of your base pay. Anything over 8 hours in a day is overtime which is an additional base pay and a half on top of base pay and hazard pay. During a busy pay period (two weeks) you could make up to 80 hours of overtime. This is a good paying summer job.

What if there are no fires?

During slow times we keep our fire crews busy. You can expect a wide range of tasks. We build fence, thin trees, participate in prescribed fire, pick up garbage, put up signs, fire patrols, fire prevention activities, paint, build trails, you name it. These extra projects also enable you to meet other people in the government and get an idea of what jobs and careers are available.

Please visit the Eastern Idaho Interagency Fire Center web site at <http://www.idahofireinfo.blm.gov/east/> and click “Fire Engines” to view information on how to apply, our local area, contact information and more.